LEARN COLOMBIAN SPANISH

Colombian words, phrases, sayings, and greetings

Colombia has very interesting areas to visit and enjoy, not only because of its aesthetic but also its story. You can find very delicious food, some enthusiastic dancers and musicians, and some of the warmest people who will welcome you with their open arms and beautiful accent. And if you don't trust us, you can ask anyone about how dreamy a paisa's accent can be (not only them, but theirs is the most popular one), and how enticing words can sound not only in Spanish but more specifically in Colombian.

Colombian people are very creative, that's the way we can find many different expressions, sayings, and slang expressions in their culture. The Spanish spoken in Colombia is very diverse and has different colors; there is a variety of linguistic constructions inside the country, from La Guajira to Amazonas. So, with that being said, let us take you to get to know a little bit more about how people talk in the country where they sing "Colombia tierra querida" and dance vividly to the rhythm of almost anything. They do enjoy having a lot of fun!

COLOMBIAN SAYINGS

¡Esto es Colombia, papá! : In this sentence, "papá" has nothing to do with the word "father", but it's used to assert the willingness to win/earn something and how proud we feel of our country and the people that represent it overseas (in the sport/music/arts field, etc).

For example: *¡Goooooooooool de Colombia! ¡Esto es Colombia, papá!*

Dar papaya: Even though papaya is very sweet and delicious, in this case, we're not mentioning any fruit but rather letting you know that it'd be a little dangerous if someone else sees your stuff because you could lose it (wink wink, get robbed)

For example: *Cuidado con el teléfono ahora que vaya al centro se lo roban, no vaya a dar papaya.* (Be careful with your phone when you're downtown because you could get robbed, don't expose yourself.)

Calle esos ojos: This is more of a common phrase between mothers/grandparents, and

it's used to indicate the need to be prudent about a certain situation or fact.

For example: *¿Emborracharse hasta morir? Ay no, ¡calle esos ojos!* (Getting drunk and wasted? Stop your nonsense, be careful with your words!)

¡Qué hubo parce! : Probably the most common one, and the friendliest too, we use it a lot to say "hi" (*Qué hubo*) to our friends (*parce/parceros*)

For example: *¡Qué hubo parce! ¿Cómo va todo?* (What's up, dude! How is it going?)

Barriga llena, corazón contento: Even though "barriga" means stomach in a very colloquial way, with "*Barriga llena, Corazón contento*" we're not directed towards our belly only. It means everything feels different when you have fulfilled all of your basic needs, like food, shelter, or health, etc. So, by doing so, you feel great about everything, even your problems.

For example: *Bueno, barriga llena, corazón contento.* (Full stomach, content heart)

El tiempo es oro: This saying is used to say that time passes quickly, and it is not enough to develop something. We usually tell someone this saying when we need to hurry up or we know time won't be enough. For example: *Date prisa que el tiempo es oro (Hurry up, time is money).*

El que guarda manjares, guarda pesares: This saying is used when someone has saved some food to eat later, but someone else eats it. This means that if you keep something delicious, you will be sorry. For example:

- *¿Quién se comió mi pizza? (Who ate my pizza?)*
- *Yo, usted sabe que el que guarda manjares, guarda pesares. (I did, you know that he who saves delicacies, saves sorrows.)*

Al que madruga, Dios le ayuda: This saying is used when we want to say that if you do things very quickly, as soon as possible, you will get more benefits.

For example: *'Llegué temprano a la fila. Por eso dicen que al que madruga Dios le ayuda''. (I got in line early. That's why they say the early bird catches the worm.)*

O todos en la cama, o todos en el suelo: This saying is used to say that we all must have access to the same conditions or punishments. For example: *Ellos también sabían, si nos van a sancionar, que los sancionen a ellos también. O todos en la cama, o todos en el*

suelo (They also knew, if we are going to be sanctioned, they should be sanctioned too. Let's be fair!).

Yerba mala nunca muere: This saying is used when we want to say that something is hard to erase, to delete, or disappear. For example: *''Ha sobrevivido a 3 accidentes. Definitivamente, yerba mala nunca muere'' (It has survived 3 accidents. Definitely, bad weed never dies).*

Más sabe el diablo por viejo que por diablo: This saying is used when we want to say that experience is more important than knowledge. For example: *''Él sabía, pero su hermano mayor sí pudo terminarlo. Es que por eso se dice que más sabe el diablo por viejo que por diablo'' (He knew, but his older brother was able to finish it. That's why it is said that the devil knows more for being old than for being a devil).*

Papaya puesta papaya partida: This saying is usually said when we have the chance to do something we normally had to ask for permission, or there is any condition or requirement to do it. For example, *a teacher forgets a copy for an evaluation and a student takes it to take advantage of it. When they teacher asks the student for explanations, he answers This saying:*

- ***¿Por qué hiciste esto Juan?*** *(Why did you do this, Juan?*
- ***Profe, usted sabe; papaya puesta, papaya partida****. (Professor, you know how it is; opportunity seen, opportunity seized.)*

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COLOMBIAN SLANG WORDS

Slang is vocabulary that is used only in colloquial contexts, mainly in spoken language, and are not used in formal writing. In Colombia, there are many slangs and they are used according to the region or community, some of them are specifir to a region, others are used around the country. The following chart shows some of the top and most common Colombian slang words:

SLANG	MEANING	Location/Region
Berraco	Used to refer to a brave person	Paisa
¡Bien o qué!	A greeting	Cali
Cachaco / Rolo	Someone who comes from Bogotá	Around the country
Chévere	Cool, something nice or pleasant	Around the country
Costeño	Someone who comes from the coast	Around the country
Cucho	An old person	Paisa
Calidoso	Someone who is very kind	
Pola	A beer	Around the country
Guaro	A type of alcohol proper of Colombia	Around the country
Jincho / Jarto	A drunk person	Llanera culture / Around the country
Guayabo	Hangover, what you feel after drinking a lot of alcohol	Around the country
Maluco	Something that is not comfortable	Paisa
Paisa	Someone who comes from Antioquia or the coffee-growing zone	Around the country
Parce/Parcero	Dude/Bro	Around the country

SLANG	MEANING	Location/Region
Plata	Money	Around the country
Quiubo	An informal greeting, like what's up?	North coast
Vaina	It's a way to refer a thing we don't remember or we just don't want to name it	Around the country
Mijo	A child, a kid, a little boy	Llanos orientales
La rusa	The daily hard work of poor communities	Bogotá
Cansado	Tired	Around the country
Sapo	A person who tells something others don’t	Around the country
Pecueca	When your feet smell bad	Around the country
Recocha	Joking	Around the country
Traga	The person you like	Around the country
Bacano	Excellent	Around the country
Camello	A job	Around the country
Camellar	To work	Around the country
Tontería	Something stupid, without sense	Around the country

SLANG	MEANING	Location/Region
Chamaco	A child	Around the country but mainly used in the coaster regions
Genial	Good	Around the country
Genial	Good	Around the country
Desparche	Nothing to do	Around the country
Tombo	A cop	Around the country
Trancón / Taco	A traffic jam	Around the country / Medellín
Foquiado	Who sleeps very deep	Around the country
Pesado	A person who bothers a lot	Around the country
Gomelo	Someone who has money	Around the country

Now, let's see some examples of the slang in the previous chart. Take into account that the translations provided here are just a guide for you to understand better the meaning, but not a literal translation. This means that they are only a guide to understand better the meaning.

- Es muy **berraco** para aguantar todo lo que está pasando. *(He is a brave man to support all what it is happening)*
- Hola, **¿bien o qué?** *(Hey, what's up)*
- Ella es una **cachaca hermosa** *(She is a beautiful girl from Bogotá)*
- Es muy **chévere** compartir con ustedes *(It's so nice to share with you)*
- Ellos son **costeños** porque vienen de Barranquilla *(They are called "Costeños" because they come from Barranquilla.)*
- Él ya está muy **cucho** para trabajar *(He is actually quite old to work)*
- Mi papá es muy **calidoso** cuando oculta algo *(My father is so kind when he hides something).*
- Hoy amanecimos con mucho **guayabo** *(Today, we woke up with a big hangover).*

- Es muy **maluco** que cambie de opinión a última hora *(It's uncomfortable that he changes his opinion at the last minute).*
- Duvan es **paisa** porque nació en el eje cafetero *(Duvan is a ''paisa'' because he was born in the coffee-growing zone)*
- Usted es mi amigo, **parce.** *(You are my friend, bro)*
- **Quiubo**, ¿cómo le fue? *(Hey, how were you going?)*
- No toque esa **vaina!** *(Don't touch that thing)*
- **Mijo** (mijito; even though it is sweet), hágame caso. *(Little boy, listen to me)*
- Mijo, usted es joven y aún no le ha tocado **vivir la rusa.** *(Kid, you are young and you have not yet lived the tough life)*
- Venga y le invito una **pola.** *(Come and I'll buy you a beer)*
- Llegó **jarto/jincho** a la casa. *(He arrived home drunk)*
- Estoy **mamado** de pelear con él, es un **mamón**. *(I'm sick of fighting with him, he's a jerk)*
- Eres un **sapo**, le contaste todo a la profesora. *(You're a tattletale, you told the teacher everything)*
- Él no se lava los pies, por eso huele a **pecueca.** *(He doesn't wash his feet, that's why he smells bad)*
- Ellos siempre cogen de **recocha** lo que les digo *(They always take what I tell them as a joke.)*
- Ahí va la **traga** de Juan *(There goes Juan's love interest)*
- ¿Tu amigo ya encontró **camello?** *(Has your friend found a job yet?)*
- Estoy **camellando** en la empresa de lácteos *(I am working in the dairy company)*
- Juan, deja de decir **tonterías**. *(Juan, stop talking nonsense)*
- Esos **chamacos** rompieron mi ventana *(Those brats broke my window)*
- Este hotel es muy **bacano**. *(This hotel is very nice)*
- La presentación estuvo **genial**. *(The presentation was great)*
- Vecina, deme un **tinto**. *(Neighbor, give me a cup of coffee)*
- ¿Quién quiere más **guaro?** *(Who wants more liquor?)*
- Un **tombo** me pidió mis documentos. *(A cop asked me for my documents)*
- Llegué tarde porque había mucho **trancón/taco**.*(I arrived late because there was a lot of traffic)*
- No soporto a ese **gomelo**. *(I can't stand that fat cat)*

COLOMBIAN GREETINGS

Now we present to you how to properly greet someone in Colombian Spanish:

In the Colombian culture, people have many different ways to greet each other:

We can greet someone formally who has certain authority or just out of the respect we have with him/her. Some examples of it are:

- Buenos días; using in the early morning of the day, like 5:00 am-12:00 pm.
- Buenas tardes; used in the afternoon, typically from 12:00 pm to 7:00 pm.
- Buenas noches; used in the evening or night, from 7:00 pm onward.

¿Como está? ¿Como se encuentra? This is widely used to ask someone about their physical status or mood by using the Usted form.

There are also more informal ways to greet people and areused in very informal situations where there are no rule of behavior in relation to greetings. Those are up to the region, and can mean something really different from what they could translate or mean, being seen in an isolated way. This means that these words together can mean something different from isolated.

The most common informal ways to greet are the following ones, all of them can be used whenever during the day, and you can receive whatever kind of answer:

- Buenas, buenas: you use this when you arrive at a place.
- ¿Qué más?
- ¿Qué se dice?
- Quiubo
- ¿Cómo va? ¿Cómo vas? ¿Cómo van?
- ¿Cómoanda?
- ¿Qué hay pa' hacer?
- ¿Qué más, veci? : This is specially used with neighbors or people around.
- ¿Qué se cuenta?
- ¿Qué anda haciendo?

COLOMBIAN EXPRESSIONS

An expression is a linguistic construction that can have a literal meaning but is different from the sayings; these can vary depending on who we are talking to.

Expressions arise from the thinking of a speech community, in this case, the Colombian people. In Colombia, it's very common for people to talk using expressions.

Let's see some of them.

Las cuentas claras y el chocolate espeso: *We use this expression when we want someone to deliver us a clear register of incomes and expenses. This is very common when we are talking about money. For example: ''Ya vendimos todo, ahora sí las cuentas claras y el chocolate espeso''.*

Sacar las piedras: *We use this expression when someone makes someone angry. For example: ''Mi hermano me sacó la piedra''.*

Uno no es monedita de oro para caerle bien a todo el mundo: *We use this expression when we want to tell someone not to worry about others' opinions, we use it to affirm that we can not get along well with everyone in the world.*

Se ve que se toma la sopita: *This expression is more used by older people when they want to say that a kid is a bit fat, it is a way to say it without being direct. Colombian people think kids should eat soup to be in good health. For example: ''Se ve que el hijo de Carmen se toma la sopita''.*

Salir el tiro por la culata: *We use this expression when someone fails in their plans, mainly when those plans affect someone or their intentions are not good at all. For example: ''Nos quería robar pero le salió el tiro por la culata''*

Bajarle al tono (tonito): *we use this expression when someone is so upset that they speak louder and in an offensive way, and we want to tell them to calm down and speak to us in a better way. For example: ''No me grite. Mejor bájele al tonito que no es tan grave''*

Tener a alguien entre ojos: *This expression is used when someone has a problem with another person and is looking for a way to take advantage of their power to affect the other person. We can also use the verb ''coger''. For example: ''El profesor me tiene entre ojos", ''El profesor me cogió entre ojos por quejarme''.*

Ponerse las pilas: *this expression is used to talk about becoming more attentive to something, being more punctual, or working more on a project. This can be used in whatever context we want. For example: ''Tienes que ponerte las pilas para pasar el año''.*

Valer un ojo de la cara: *This expression is used when we want to say that a product is very expensive or it is out of our budget, we can't pay for it. For example: ''Esa camisa valía un*

ojo de la cara, costaba el doble de lo que tenía''.

Hacer lo que se le dé la gana: *This expression is used when we want to say that someone does what they want but doesn't listen to orders or suggestions. For example: ''No me quiso escuchar así que le dije que hiciera lo que se le diera la gana''.*

Bajarse de la nube: *this expression is used when we want to tell someone that is making many expectations or illusions about something or someone, we also use it to say that a project could not be developed. For example: ''Él no te ama, bájate de esa nube''.*

Hacer una vaca: *this expression is used when we want to collect money as a group among several people, we use it to refer to a common fund of money that is done quickly and for a unique and specific purpose. For example: ''Hagamos vaca para comprar almuerzo''.*

Comerse el cuento: *this expression is used to refer to a person who has believed in a lie another one has told him, a person who believes something is false. For example: ''Ella siempre se come el cuento de que estoy trabajando''.*

Echar los perros: *This expression is used when someone is flirting with another person. It is a very colloquial expression. For example: ''Tu vecino me estaba echando los perros''.*

Colombian TV Shows

- El Patrón del Mal
- La Reina del Flow
- Locolombianos
- Betty la Fea
- Wild District

COLOMBIAN Music

Take a look at this Spotify playlist, Colombian Jukebox. It is updated every few weeks with new songs of Colombian musicians: https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2Nb56RN0l2x6ZQ2EvSgFCJ?si=mKHDqoioT02jm7F8dave4A&nd=1

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